

---

# *A CNRF Action Officer's Survival Guide*

**CDR Paul Branum  
CNSRF N01B**

# *Contents*

- ◆ **CNRF Has Its Own Culture**
- ◆ **Essential Skills**
- ◆ **Rules to Live By**
- ◆ **(SI)ideology**
- ◆ **Gouge**

# *CNRF has its own culture*

- ◆ **Traditional culture: “We’re staff officers, not decision makers.”**

## **Wrong!**

- Truth: We’re staff officers and decision makers
- ◆ **Different philosophy from other staffs**
  - Joint Staff: AO is the expert, let him talk
  - OPNAV: AO supports Flag Officer
  - CNRF: COMBINATION

# *CNRF has its own culture*

- ◆ **Very few actions have operational immediacy, but given a choice, everybody wants it done *now!***
- ◆ **Decision-makers are busy**
  - How you say it may mean more than what you say
- ◆ **Other Services teach staff work**
  - You are at a disadvantage

# *Essential skills:*

- ◆ **Computer skills (your new weapon):**

- You are your own secretary
- Learn. See your training coordinator for classes:
  - ◆ Groupwise
  - ◆ Microsoft Word
  - ◆ Powerpoint
  - ◆ Excel
  - ◆ and more...
- Learn how to create and manage files

# *Essential skills:*

## **Paperwork**

- Letterhead:
  - ◆ Use only if you have “by direction” authority
- Memorandum:
  - ◆ any document for the record
- Point Paper:
  - ◆ a one page summary of a subject for action or information purposes

## ◆ **Financial**

- PPBS Process
  - ◆ Know who gives you money and where it goes.

# *Rules to live by:*

- ◆ **Keep point papers to one page**
  - Even Clausewitz has been summarized in one page. Get input from your fellow staff members, or even better, use the Navy Correspondence Manual...
  - **Keep briefings short**
    - 10 slides for 20 min.
- ◆ **Build a network-- it will save you in a crunch**
  - “Run your traplines” at least weekly

# *Rules to live by:*

- ◆ **When giving a briefing, never:**
  - Make up stuff
  - Tell jokes (humor is OK, but jokes are apt to offend someone...)
- ◆ **Remember, we're making a movie**
  - 90% of what we do ends up on cutting room floor
- ◆ **“Rule of 3’s”**
  - If you finish 3 of anything, GO HOME!

# *(SI) ideology:*

## ◆ **Slidesmanship**

- Don't build eye charts
- Date & number each slide

## ◆ **Presentation**

- Don't read the slides
- Avoid scripts, but use one if unsure

# *Gouge*

- ◆ **Hit the GYM**

- Remember, they will always want it today
- Best excuse you have for getting away from desk

- ◆ **This is shore duty-- either enjoy it or better yourself, but don't do nothing**

- Don't vegetate-- recreate
- Master's Degrees or JPME

# *Gouge*

- ◆ **Give it your best, then let it go**
  - OPNAV or Congress will change it anyway
- ◆ **If the issue involves 2015 and beyond, don't sacrifice dinner tonight with your family to finish it**
- ◆ **“Job” = Staff, Navy**  
**“Life” = what you do outside the building**  
**“Action Officer” is a temporary title**  
**“Dad” & “Mom” are permanent titles**

# *Back-Up File*

## **The Ten Action Officer Commandments**

- Keep it simple.
- Plain English is spoken throughout the staff. Write the way you speak.
- Be concise.
- Be honest. If you don't know, say so, but find the answer as soon as possible.
- Be flexible. Be receptive and always respect the other guy's opinion.

- Be persistent. If it's a good one... push your idea.
- Sell your idea by knowing it inside and out. Be able to cover the high points in 30 seconds.
- Network. Stay informed and keep your boss informed.
- Be accurate. Don't rely on someone else to get the facts for you.
- Bottom line: Do complete staff work.